



THE FAWCETT FLYER

April 2018



It has been a long time coming but March 17th was a great day for the people of South Australia with the clear election of a Marshall Liberal Government!

The Commonwealth Government has, despite media headlines, been focussed on the economy, growing jobs and improving energy security. Over the past 12 months a record 420,000 jobs have been created, the majority of which are full time. We have strengthened national security through investments in new armoured vehicles for Army, introduced new laws to protect critical infrastructure, and increased our support to veterans and their families.

The Government responded to the report into Veteran's Suicide by the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade committee and has agreed in full to 22 of the 24 recommendations. They have agreed in principle

to the remaining two, and importantly, actions flowing from the 24 recommendations have in many cases already been funded.

As Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, I initiated an inquiry last month into the effectiveness of Australia's aid to the Indo-Pacific region. If anyone ever doubted the strategic importance of Australia providing aid to our region, it came into sharp focus this past week when stories emerged about the possibility of China building a military base in Vanuatu. The Government of Vanuatu has denied any formal discussions are taking place, but they acknowledge a growing relationship with China, who have just constructed new facilities in Vanuatu to allow large ships to dock. This highlights the importance of working with, and investing in, neighbouring nations such

that they will see Australia as their strategic partner of choice. The militarisation of the Pacific would seriously affect Australia's security environment.

Rural doctors continue to provide positive feedback about the Commonwealth's rural health policies and have welcomed the election of a state Liberal Government. This is due in large part to Stephen Wade's constructive engagement with the sector which I saw first hand during round table consultations prior to the election. It is also due to the commitment to work with the Commonwealth to catch up with the other states in establishing a "rural generalist" pathway for junior doctors to help address workforce shortages in regional areas. The Commonwealth has also made a further investment of \$84m dollars in the Royal Flying Doctor Service which will support the continued provision of dental care as well as the establishment of

a mental health service for rural and remote Australia.

While Parliament is not sitting, I have been out and about with citizenship ceremonies in my paired seats, holding constituent and industry meetings as well as ongoing committee inquiries. You can follow much of this on my Facebook page, however, if there is further information I can provide about any topics covered in this edition of the Fawcett Flyer, please feel free to get in touch.

SENATOR DAVID FAWCETT





CAMPAIGN TRAIL WRAP UP

Congratulations to Premier Steven Marshall and his team who saw four years of disciplined work pay-off on 17 March. For the first time since 2002, South Australia now has a Liberal Government!

I was able to spend election day campaigning for Dr Richard Harvey and Aaron Duff, whose electorates cover portions of my paired seats of Makin and Kingston. It's great to see increased Liberal representation in Makin, where both Richard and Paula Leuthen were able to win their seats. Thank you so much to Aaron and other candidates who invested an enormous amount of time and energy into their campaigns, building the Liberal vote in their electorate and supporting the election of our members of the Legislative Council.

The election of a Marshall Liberal Government is a critical turning point for our state, which will improve outcomes for so many members of our community over the coming years. From a Federal perspective, it will be refreshing to have state counterparts who will engage on issues based on the merit of policy and not default to opposition due to ideology. We have already seen the new Liberal government reject Labor's go-it alone energy policy in favour of a national approach.

IN THE MEDIA

During Senate Estimates I confirmed a discrepancy in our support for the spouses of veterans and also proposed reforms which are now being actioned by the Department of Veterans' Affairs. These reforms would ensure that long term carers who become victims of domestic violence continue to receive financial support if they divorce an abusive veteran.

During community forums held in SA, I've been made aware of cases where spouses have given up their career to provide long term care of a veteran who was totally and permanently incapacitated, only to face domestic violence in the course of providing that care. Unlike a woman who is widowed, they have then had financial support from the Department cut even if the divorce is initiated for their own safety.

I have called on Darren Chester MP, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs to ensure that the law does not deter victims from separating from a violent relationship.

“My understanding is that DVA say ‘well you’re not a widow and you’re no longer the partner of a veteran’ but it’s the same woman who’s provided the same support over many years.”

Victims robbed of payments

SHERADYN HOLDERHEAD
FEDERAL POLITICAL
EDITOR

VICTIMS of domestic violence suffered at the hands of their veteran spouses are being

who was totally and permanently incapacitated (TPI).
“There was domestic violence involved. She took out an

AVO. He has chosen to divorce her,” Mr Fawcett said.

“My understanding is that DVA say ‘well, you’re not a

some young soldiers were returning from deployment to find “an empty house”.

“Clearly in that situation, you don’t necessarily want the benefits going (continuing),” he said. “But in cases ... where someone has given up a career to care for a veteran who is a ... that outcome (of losing ... near to be



SECURING OUR CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The Turnbull Government has passed the Security of Critical Infrastructure Bill to safeguard Australia's critical infrastructure assets from foreign sabotage, espionage and coercion.

While foreign investment has generated significant economic opportunities for Australia, we must ensure that vital assets are protected from undue interference.

These reforms are the product of extensive consultation with

government and industry stakeholders and an enquiry by the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence and Security (PJCIS).

All recommendations were adopted by the Government after the release of the Committee's report on March 15.

The bill enhances the capability of the Critical Infrastructure Centre by establishing a register

of critical infrastructure assets, which will help the Centre to understand who owns, controls, and has access to Australia's critical infrastructure. This will allow for more proactive management of the risks faced by assets in our high-risk sectors, including electricity, water, ports, and telecommunications.

The bill also enables the Minister for Home Affairs to issue a direction to an owner or operator of a critical infrastructure asset to mitigate national security risks that cannot be managed through cooperation or existing regulator mechanisms.

This can only occur after an adverse ASIO security assessment. This power can be used to direct asset owners or operators to undertake or refrain from certain actions, and is limited to certain instances including:

- An identified risk which is prejudicial to security; and
- Through collaboration,

the owner or operator does not or cannot implement mitigations to address the risk.

Importantly, the decisions of the Minister are subject to judicial review, while ASIO security assessments are subject to merits review.

The bill builds on measures taken to secure telecommunications assets through the Telecommunications Sector Security Reforms.

As I highlighted in the last edition of the Fawcett Flyer, the Prime Minister has tasked the PJCIS with investigating and reporting on proposed changes that will target foreign interference and espionage.

The Committee is currently considering a range of amendments to the proposed legislation that have been provided by the Attorney-General, the Hon Christian Porter MP.

SENATE COMMITTEE DELIVERS MORE SUPPORT FOR VETERANS

As a member of the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee, I am very pleased to see the passage of the Veterans Affairs Legislative Amendment, which was developed as a result of the Committee's report into suicide by veterans and ex-service personnel.

The Government has also announced a Productivity Commission inquiry into the system of compensation and rehabilitation for veterans, which will examine whether the system of compensation is fit for purpose now and into the future.

This inquiry will also review the governance arrangements, administrative processes and service delivery of the Veterans' Affairs portfolio, and is another aspect of the Government's response to a report by the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee on suicide by veterans and

ex-service personnel.

Public consultation will be undertaken as part of the inquiry and the Government encourages all interested parties to participate. Further information and the terms of reference are available on the Commission's website.

The Government's response to the work of the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee demonstrates the power of the thorough investigative process that the Senate's committee system provides.

By carefully considering legislative proposals and seeking submissions from stakeholders, Parliament's committees are able to provide scrutiny, and inform debate and policy direction.

In this instance, the Committee has shone light on the need to deliver increased support and income payments to veterans and their

families. The Veterans Affairs Legislative Amendment delivers:

- A new pilot mental health program which will support veterans in rural and regional areas with chronic mental health issues.

- A new income support payment for veterans unable to work as a result of mental health issues.

- Increased access to childcare assistance, home care and counselling will be available.

- Household and attendant care services for those who have suffered a catastrophic

injury.

- Access to a gold card for ADF members who served in Japan at the end of WWII before the Commonwealth Occupation Force commenced.

This is in addition to a \$31 million increase to veterans' mental health services in 2017.

Darren Chester MP, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs has also confirmed that any person who has served just one day in the ADF will be eligible for free mental health treatment for any mental health condition.



DELIVERING BETTER SERVICES FOR VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES



PUTTING DOWNWARD PRESSURE ON ELECTRICITY PRICES

As I mentioned on page 3, we have already seen the new Liberal government reject Labor's go-it-alone energy policy in favour of a national approach. SA Labor's renewable energy experiment has clearly failed, and any future energy mix must ensure that reliability, price and certainty are key considerations.

I look forward to seeing the Federal Government working together with the SA Government to make energy more affordable for households and businesses through the National Energy Guarantee. Unlike pure subsidy schemes like clean energy targets, the NEG is technology neutral, with a focus on reliable and dispatchable electricity generation.

The Federal Government through the Australian Renewable Energy Agency is also supporting Simply Energy's development of a virtual power plant in Adelaide to help reduce power prices and improve the reliability of our grid. \$7.7 million will be contributed towards the development of the virtual power plant which will link 1200 Tesla powerwall batteries and rooftop solar panels by the end of 2019.



OUT AND ABOUT

As Chair of Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade I represented Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull at the 97th Anniversary of the Royal Australian Air Force and was honoured to lay a wreath in memory of all Defence aviation personnel who have lost their lives in the service of Australia.

The Committee also met with a delegation from the Israeli Knesset (Parliament) to discuss enhanced cooperation in areas ranging from cyber security to water recycling.

It is important that we continue to develop our relations with Israel as we meet the common threat

posed by Islamist terrorism and cyber weapons.

I was also pleased to recognise a number of individuals and project teams whose efforts have significantly contributed to Australia's defence industry and capability at the Defence Materials Technologies Centre Annual Conference (DMTC).

DMTC's collaborative research approach helps to bring large industry partners such as BAE Systems Australia and Thales together with research partners, SMEs and Defence to work on programs that supply innovative materials and manufacturing solutions to enhance Australia's national defence.



Deputy Government Whip In The Senate

Chair, Joint Standing Committee On Foreign Affairs, Defence And Trade

Parliamentary Joint Committee On Intelligence And Security

Joint Standing Committee On Treaties

Senate Standing Committees On Foreign Affairs, Defence And Trade

Senate Standing Committee On Appropriations, Staffing And Security

Senate Standing Committee For Selection Of Bills

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